



ECD And Bekaert Enter into \$84 Million Joint Venture to Expand Solar Manufacturing Capacity

Troy, Mich., and Kortrijk, Belgium, April 4, 2000

Energy Conversion Devices, Inc. (ECD)(NASDAQ:ENER) and N.V. Bekaert S.A. (Bekaert) announced today a strategic alliance in the field of photovoltaic (solar) products. The joint venture entails an investment by Bekaert in a new manufacturing plant with an annual capacity of 25 megawatts (MW) to be designed and built by ECD, a sales and marketing expansion program, and the purchase of Canon Inc.'s entire interest in ECD's photovoltaic joint venture, United Solar Systems Corp. (United Solar), at a total cost of \$84 million.

The new ECD-Bekaert strategic alliance will operate through two related companies B United Solar, which will be owned 81% by ECD and 19% by Bekaert, and a new assembly, marketing and sales company, Bekaert-ECD Solar Systems LLC, which will be owned 60% by Bekaert and 40% by United Solar. Combined, ECD and Bekaert each will have a 50% share of the joint venture.

U.S. Secretary of Energy, Bill Richardson, in commenting on the alliance, noted, "Increasing the size of solar manufacturing plants is a critical step in bringing the costs down. As we begin the celebration of Earthday 2000, it is essential that we highlight the importance of affordable, clean energy options for a secure future. ECD/United Solar has been working in partnership with the Department of Energy and the National Renewable Energy Laboratory, and has achieved world record sunlight-to-electricity conversion efficiencies in amorphous silicon alloy solar cells and panels and has developed award-winning products such as the solar roofing shingles.

Stanford R. Ovshinsky, President and CEO of ECD and Chairman and CEO of United Solar, said, "The 25MW capacity production equipment, based on ECD's proprietary triple-junction continuous roll-to-roll production technology, will dramatically reduce production cost of photovoltaic products. He further stated that, "This capacity expansion represents a major step in United Solar's goal of producing photovoltaic products which, in high volume, can be competitive with conventional fuels B a much sought-after solution.

Robert C. Stempel, Chairman of ECD, said, "We are particularly pleased with the new Bekaert strategic alliance which envisions utilizing Bekaert's worldwide marketing reach to expand market penetration of United Solar's products throughout the world."

Raf Decaluwé, CEO of Bekaert, noted, "This joint venture is of prime importance and a deliberate step in Bekaert's renewable energy process. It forms a "perfect fit and is the fruit of our continuous search for new products and new applications in promising market segments with a high natural growth potential. It is based on our core competencies in a broad range of metal transformation and coating technologies. The large number of patents and technology owned by ECD/United Solar, combined with Bekaert's portfolio of competencies, will push the growth of United Solar and will also trigger the development of new products and new applications in the future."

Guy Haemers, Corporate Vice President, added, "Bekaert focuses not only on highly advanced technological products and processes, but also on promising market segments receiving high attention in large segments of the population that care for green non-polluting energy." (For additional information, visit Bekaert's corporate web site (www.bekaert.com) for its press release on this strategic alliance.)

ECD and Canon formed the United Solar joint venture in 1990. Working together in the photovoltaic field, significant advances in the technology have been made. As part of ECD's purchase of Canon's entire interest in United Solar, ECD will issue 700,000 shares of ECD Common Stock to Canon. With its prior holdings of ECD Common Stock, Canon, at approximately 7% of total Common Stock, is now ECD's largest stockholder.

Bekaert, the worldwide leading manufacturer of steel wire, steel wire products and steel cord, is a fast-growing manufacturer of advanced materials. Its market and technological leadership is based on metal-forming and a wide range of coating technologies. Bekaert is a worldwide company with over 70 production centers and a workforce of 17,000 people.

United Solar is the world leader in thin-film amorphous photovoltaics. ECD and United Solar have pioneered, developed and hold basic patents covering the continuous roll-to-roll manufacturing of thin-film amorphous silicon alloy multi-junction solar cells and related products, including flexible solar battery chargers, framed power modules, Uni-Kit Lighting Systems and UNI-SOLAR7 Roofing Shingles and Metal Roofing Panels. These unique products are flexible, rugged and lightweight and offer significant advantages over conventional solar panels in providing more energy per rated watt under normal outdoor conditions.

ECD is a leader in the synthesis of new materials and the development of advanced production technology and innovative products. It has pioneered and developed enabling technologies leading to new products and production processes based on amorphous, disordered and related materials, with an emphasis on alternative energy and advanced information technologies. ECD's web site address is <http://www.ovonic.com>.

This release may contain forward-looking statements within the meaning of the Safe Harbor Provisions of the Private Securities Litigation Reform Act of 1995. Such forward-looking statements are based on assumptions which ECD, as of the date of this release, believes to be reasonable and appropriate. ECD cautions, however, that the actual facts and conditions that may exist in the future could vary materially from the assumed facts and conditions upon which such forward-looking statements are based.

Contact:
Energy Conversion Devices, Inc.
(248) 280-1900